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ABSTRACT

This book explores what makes a school excellent. Schools are considered excellent, "good enough," or bad, depending upon multiple factors; "good enough" implies that a school could be doing better. The use and misuse of testing and educational assessment are discussed. Academic assessment based on multiple measures is recommended over high-stakes testing as a more accurate means of describing students' strengths and weaknesses. High standards, transparent testing policies, teacher-made tests, and tests that are demonstrably valid and reliable are suggested as tools for creating excellence in testing. The checkered history of technology (television, computers, Internet) in education, problems, and strategies for improving their use as learning media are treated. Teachers' problems with respect to time, energy, and poor training are considered. Misconceptions about students, charter schools, school safety, and misplaced cultural and political values are other issues discussed. Parents concerned about school quality for their children can find sound advice in what to look for in a school setting. Most chapters conclude with a list of questions about practices, behaviors, and strategies that parents can use to come to a reasoned judgment about a school and its practices and policies. (RT)